





THE
PROTESTANT FAITH,
OR
“THE WAY CALLED HERESY.”

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

A SERMON,
PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH,
CHELTENHAM,
ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13th, 1835.

BY
THE REV. F. CLOSE, A.M.
INCUMBENT.

Acts xxiv. 14.

AS THIS SERMON IS PUBLISHED AT THE SOLE EXPENSE OF A FRIEND
TO THE PROTESTANT CAUSE, THE WHOLE PROCEEDS OF ITS
SALE WILL BE ADDED TO THE CONTRIBUTIONS
IN AID OF THE

DISTRESSED IRISH CLERGY.

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TO BE HAD OF THE AUTHOR;
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THE
PROTESTANT FAITH

THE WAY CALLED LIBERTY

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH

OF ST. MARY

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1854

THE REV. F. CROSE, A.M.

MINISTER

OF ST. MARY

DISTRESSED WISH CLEVER

LONDON

JOHN GIBSON AND SON, 15, PATERNOSTER ROW

TO BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS

AND OF THE AUTHOR, 15, PATERNOSTER ROW

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A SERMON.

ACTS xxiv. 14.

“BUT THIS I CONFESS UNTO THEE, THAT AFTER THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL HERESY, SO WORSHIP I THE GOD OF MY FATHERS, BELIEVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.”

WHAT a noble object is here presented to our view ! Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, is arraigned at the Roman bar ; he is accused of turbulence, sedition, and schism ; a multitude of Jews “of the baser sort” vehemently accuse him ; Tertullus, an eloquent and distinguished orator, is engaged to plead against him ; and his judge is one of those who “care for none of these things :”—under these trying circumstances, behold the servant of the Lord, with what dignity and composure he enters on his defence ! Having courteously addressed the Roman governor, he solemnly

denies the charges of sedition and turbulence alleged against him: "They neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city; neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me." "But," he adds, "this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets!"

This confession of the apostle's faith, appears to comprehend all the essential truths of Christianity; and it will be my endeavour, on this occasion, to show that the very position in which the pure and reformed part of the Church of Christ stands at this moment, with respect to the great apostacy of Rome, is here described with singular felicity; to prove that ours is the ANCIENT WAY, and the SCRIPTURAL WAY; that it is nevertheless esteemed, by the Church of Rome, to be "THE WAY CALLED HERESY;" and that it is in defence of "THIS WAY" that our Protestant Brethren in Ireland, both laity and clergy, are now suffering.

May we be enabled to pursue this enquiry with the moderation befitting the importance of the subject; and while we "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the

saints," and are "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us," may we ever do it "IN MEEKNESS AND FEAR!"¹

I. LET US CONSIDER THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROTESTANT FAITH. Two of them are suggested by the text, viz. : its ANTIQUITY—"We worship the God of our fathers;" and, ITS SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY—"We believe all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets."

(1.) THE PROTESTANT FAITH IS THE ANCIENT FAITH OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH. It was a charge frequently alleged against our blessed Lord himself, and his apostles, that their doctrines tended to the overthrow of the ancient faith, and that their religion was a new religion, contrary to the law of Moses, and calculated to lead men away from the Lord God of their fathers. In reply to this it was, that Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."² He swept away, indeed, with an unsparing hand, the "vain traditions" by which the rabbies had "made the law of God of none effect;" but the dispensation which he came to introduce, was only the perfection of that which

¹ 1 Peter iii. 15.

² Matthew v. 17.

it was about to supersede. In like manner, St. Paul declares, "That he taught none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come."¹ The religion of Jesus, though in some respects new, was not opposed to that which went before it; but Christianity was the fulness and perfection of Judaism.

The pastors of the Roman Church, in this respect, resemble the expounders of the law in the days of our Lord; they are wont to assume for their creed undoubted antiquity, and to beguile the unlearned and simple with the idea that theirs is the ancient faith, and ours a novel opinion, and one that had no existence before the time of Luther and the Reformation. Could this be established, we should be convicted of innovation and heresy, and we should be cut off from all claim to apostolic authority. Often as this assertion has been refuted it is re-asserted with all confidence, and can be met only by renewed protestation. That most of the tenets of Romanism against which we protest, were the offspring of the middle or dark ages, and that some were added in times even more modern than those, might be shown from ecclesiastical history. But for us, it is enough

¹ Acts xxvi. 22, 23.

that the erroneous doctrines of the Roman Church are not to be found in holy scripture ; this alone is a sufficient proof that they were not taught by our Lord and his apostles. For he must be credulous indeed, who can believe that the inspired writers could have been silent upon so many points of such great importance, if they believed them ; and that the inspired writers are either silent respecting the distinguishing tenets of Romanism, or that they bear a strong and decided testimony against them, is obvious, and may easily be proved. The doctrines which we hold are derived immediately from our Lord himself, or from the writings of his apostles ; the peculiar tenets of Romanism, were taught and received after the canon of scripture was closed, and its writers were deceased ; it follows, of necessity, that the faith we profess is the primitive faith, and that most agreeable to the word of God. Our doctrines and discipline are not innovations ; they are as old as Christianity itself. Our enlightened ancestors rejected indeed those “ traditions of men ” which made “ the word of God of none effect,” and swept away those superstitions which defaced the venerable structure of the Church ; but all that was found in her according to the revealed will of God remains, even as it was in the apostolic times. We are not “ setters forth of

strange gods," we worship "the God of our fathers."

These positions will be further established, by considering more attentively (2.) THE OTHER DISTINGUISHING CHARACTER OF PROTESTANTISM, AND ITS PECULIAR GLORY; viz. : THAT THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD IS OUR ONLY INFALLIBLE GUIDE IN MATTERS OF FAITH.¹ In this we follow the steps of the noble confessor in the text—"WE BELIEVE ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS;" a declaration from which it may be justly inferred that he believed nothing more. It is unnecessary here to prove a point admitted by all—that the old and new testaments are to us what the "law and the prophets" were to St. Paul; the Roman Church, in common with our own, holds the inspiration of the whole word of God. We deduce from this admission, our fundamental principle—THAT THE BIBLE AND THE BIBLE ALONE IS THE RULE OF OUR FAITH. Hence we see at once a reason assigned for our denial of many of the doctrines of the Church of Rome; we do not believe them, simply because we do not find them in holy scripture. "Holy scripture,"

¹ The Roman Church holds that her traditions are to be received with equal reverence as the WRITTEN inspired scriptures. "PARI VENERATIONIS, PARI PIETATIS AFFECTU." *Council of Trent, De Canon. Script.*

saith our Church, in her sixth article, “ containeth all things necessary to salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” Let us bring to this test some of the most popular doctrines of the Church of Rome : she holds, for instance, the efficacy of THE INTERCESSION OF DEPARTED SAINTS, AND PRAYS TO THEM FOR THEIR MEDIATION WITH GOD IN OUR FAVOUR. In her daily liturgies, and in her occasional services, she teaches her people to pray after this manner : “ Holy Mary, holy Abel, all ye choirs of the just, holy Abraham—all ye holy bishops and confessors, &c.—all ye HOLY MONKS AND HERMITS—all ye HOLY VIRGINS AND WIDOWS, PRAY FOR US !”¹ Now, without expressing any other opinion respecting them, we cannot join in such prayers as these, simply because we cannot find in the word of God one instance of such petitions, or of similar ones. On one or two occasions we read that good men, as Daniel and Saint John, when they saw a vision of an angel, overcome with awe, fell down to worship him ; but what said the angel to St. John—“ SEE

¹ This is an extract from the Roman Service, “ when a soul is departing.”

THOU DO IT NOT; for I am thy FELLOW SERVANT, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; WORSHIP GOD!"¹ And if we must not pray to nor worship an angel, we cannot think it lawful to pray to the spirits of departed men and women. Besides, we find that this multiplicity of intercessors is directly opposed to a plain text of scripture—"There is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."² He liveth, we are told, expressly for this work, and to fulfil this office; "HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US."³ We judge, therefore, that we need no other intercessor.

For the same reason it is that we cannot invoke the blessed Virgin Mary as "THE MOTHER OF GOD," and "THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN," nor hold her in that reverence that the Romanists do; for not only do we find no trace of such worship in scripture, but on one occasion in particular, our Lord seemed to leave on record a special corrective for such an error. When a certain woman, in the company who were listening to our Lord, charmed with the gracious words which he spake, exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast

¹ Rev. xxii. 9.

² 1 Timothy ii. 5.

³ Heb. vii. 25—also Rom. viii. 34.

sucked," he replied—"Yea, RATHER BLESSED are they that hear the word of God and keep it."¹ Intimating that a spiritual perception of his doctrine was more excellent, and more to be prized than the mere circumstance of being his virgin mother.²

The doctrine of the Church of Rome respecting the sacrament of the Lord's supper we likewise reject upon the same principle. Before she will grant them absolution she teaches her children to confess,—

"That in the mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. And that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation. I also confess that under either kind alone Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament."³

We protest against all this, not merely as contrary to reason and the evidence of our senses, (tests to which all the sensible miracles of our Lord, and even the certainty of his resurrection, were ever subjected,) but as destitute of all scriptural authority, and involving a denial of the great fundamental truth of

¹ Luke xi. 27, 28. ² See also Mark iii. 31—35.

³ *Ordo Administrandi Sacramenta, et alia quædam officia, &c.* Dublin, authenticated by Abp. Troy, 1820.

Christianity, that there was but ONE SACRIFICE for sins ONCE OFFERED; but here is a perpetual sacrifice continually offered in the Church of Rome! Then that would be true which the apostle expressly denies—"Then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world—but now ONCE, in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." And again the apostle says, "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ was ONCE FOR ALL!"¹ As we need not many mediators, neither do we find in scripture more than one sacrifice. And who can deny that "THE ELEVATION OF THE HOST," the uplifting of the consecrated wafer, said to contain the "DIVINITY OF CHRIST," and before which the faithful are required to bow down and prostrate themselves, amounts to the sin denounced by Moses, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them."²

Many other points of faith in the Roman Church are equally destitute of scriptural foundation. The assumed universal supremacy of the Roman Pontiff, the Pope, has no basis in scripture, nor in any authority derived from the apostles. If we were to admit that our Lord entrusted the "Keys" to St. Peter, with

¹ Heb. ix. 25—28, and x. 10.

² Exodus xx. 5.

the intention of investing him with superiority over the other apostles, (a superiority which he never claimed nor exercised) proof would still be entirely wanting that he was ever Bishop of Rome, and indeed it appears questionable whether he ever were at Rome, or in any way connected with the Church of Rome. The universal supremacy of the Bishop of Rome is a mere ambitious assumption, and has no warrant from scripture.

THE CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY is another tenet of the Roman apostacy, totally opposed to the word of God ; a tenet that has contributed more than any other to sever the bonds of society, and to promote licentiousness. We have the authority of the sacred history for stating that St. Peter himself was a married man, and that St. Paul, while under some circumstances he recommends the single state (not to the clergy in particular, but to all,) claims for himself the lawfulness of marriage.¹ And it is further predicted in the inspired volume that this dogma of the Romish Church should be one mark of its apostacy ;

¹ Compare Matt. viii. 14.—Luke iv. 38.—1 Cor. vii. 26 to 40; and more particularly 1 Cor. ix, 5, 6; from which it appears that Cephas, or Peter, took his wife with him on his apostolic journies. Also 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4, 11, 12. Where the character and duties of the WIVES and FAMILIES of bishops and deacons are stated at length.

“Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats.”¹

The whole system of AURICULAR CONFESSION, and individual absolution by a priest, is destitute of scriptural foundation. We are enjoined “to confess our faults one to another;” but confession to a priest, and absolution from him as necessary to forgiveness, is nowhere mentioned in scripture.² Who can forgive sins but God only? Time and space forbid the enumeration of many other tenets of the Roman Church equally as unscriptural. Such is that of purgatory, or expiatory torture in the separate state; for which we look in vain in scripture. The immediate and eternal happiness or misery of the soul of man, on the instant of its separation from the body is a truth taught in innumerable passages of the word of God.³ Neither can we receive the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church until it is presented to us in God’s holy word. Peter himself erred, and St. Paul withstood him to the face, because he was to

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.

² St. John says, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ;” (1 John ii. 1.) but he says nothing of confession.

³ Eccles. xii. 7—Matt. xxii. 23 to 33—Luke xvi. 20 and xxiii. 43—Rom. viii. 38—2 Cor. v. 1 to 9—Ephes. iii. 15—1 Thess. v. 10—Phil. i. 21 to 23—Heb. xii. 1 to 24.

be blamed.¹ Infallibility is no where claimed by the Church in scripture.

Seeing then that for so many of the doctrines of Romanism there is no authority in the divine records, the policy of that Church in withholding the scriptures from general circulation is manifest ; a policy which has uniformly been adopted in countries where the Church of Rome is dominant. But upon those scriptures of God we take our stand, and claim our right to reject “any doctrine that is not contained therein, nor can be proved thereby.”

What then is the Protestant faith ? It is the religion of the BIBLE, and of the BIBLE ALONE. Here is the foundation of our faith. Are we asked, as members of that branch of the Catholic or universal Church established in these realms, what is our faith ? We point to her articles, her creeds, her simple, antient, and devout liturgies, and her authorized homilies ; and we say, here is the EXPOSITION of our faith ! In matters indifferent, or upon points unrevealed, we scruple not to receive the assistance of tradition, or antient usages, and we cheerfully bow in such things to the discipline and authority of our Church. But we receive nothing as “an article

¹ Gal. ii. 11.

of faith," which is not contained in scripture.

But is the question put to us as Protestants at large? We return to the position, that "the bible, and the bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." Upon the grand fundamental tenets of our common faith, all who have separated from the Church of Rome, with the single exception of one small sect, are agreed.

It would be a fruitless attempt to compress into one small division of a discourse, even an outline of those blessed and glorious truths in the belief of which our common salvation consists. The ruined state of man by the fall—salvation through the perfect and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction of the incarnate Deity—the renewal and sanctification of the soul through the operation of the Holy Spirit—the certain hope of the believer in the hour of death and in the day of judgment—the resurrection of the dead—and the glorious consummation of all things, at the second coming of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, when the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, and all other mysteries will be unfolded to us, and "we shall know even as also we are known"—these are some of those truths in which all are agreed who receive the holy scripture as the only infallible rule of faith. May these and such like truths become daily more precious

to our hearts, and more influential on our lives ; that we may be found walking in them as those should walk “ who believe all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets.”

But I proceed to show, II. THAT THIS IS THE WAY CALLED HERESY BY THE CHURCH OF ROME, AND THAT IT IS IN DEFENCE OF THIS WAY THAT THE CLERGY OF IRELAND ARE NOW SUFFERING. It is a fact not more startling than true, that the Church of Rome esteems as heretics all baptized persons who separate from her communion ; all, indeed, who question the decrees of a general council sanctioned by the pope, are heretics ; under which denomination therefore the whole Church of England with her dignitaries, her archbishops, bishops, clergy, and people are comprised !

Greatly indeed may the Church of Rome congratulate herself upon the fatal delusion in which too many persons who still call themselves Protestants are involved ; lamentably are they fallen from the principles of their forefathers ! They are beguiled into the persuasion that Romanism is no longer what it once was, that its severer features are softened down, that it bears not now that stern imperious character with which it is invested in history. Nay, there are not a few persons who conceive that the differences be-

tween the churches are neither many nor important! But what a reflection is thus cast upon the memory of those sainted men who freely shed their blood in defence of the Protestant faith! What weakness and folly did they discover, (though not a few of them were among the most learned and excellent men of their day,) if they suffered at the hands of Popery bonds, imprisonments, tortures, and death, in defence of MERE MATTERS OF OPINION, NON-ESSENTIALS AND MINOR DIFFERENCES! It is to be feared that they who thus speak and think of the defenders of the faith would not shed one drop of their own blood in defence of any thing which they call religion!

But whatever delusions may prevail among Protestants upon this subject, the unaltered, and unalterable bearing of the Roman Church towards heretics, (and all Protestants are heretics in her eyes,) is capable of incontrovertible proof. Uniformity of practice may justly lead us to suspect uniformity of principle. Had the cruel discipline of that Church—the horrors of its inquisition—its *auto da fè*, and the tortures of its unhappy victims been confined to one age or nation, charity might have led us to hope that they, rather than the Church herself, were to be condemned, who so rigorously carried her laws into effect. One age—one nation—

one government might be cruel and vindictive, and the flames of persecution might be kindled by local circumstances, or the spirit of the times. But this mode of reasoning is wholly inapplicable to the case before us. Wherever the power of the Roman Church has been dominant, and expediency has permitted, its practice has been uniform; whether its laws have been dispensed by Spaniards, or Portuguese, by Frenchmen, Irishmen, or Englishmen; whether the offenders against its decrees were found in Germany, or in South America—in the vallies of the Appenines, or on the plains of India—one mode has been pursued, and one system adopted; the groans of the sufferers in the dungeons at Madrid have been echoed back from the plains of India by their fellow captives in the ecclesiastical prisons at Goa! Through succeeding centuries, in countries widely distant, among people of different habits and pursuits, every where and always, HERESY has so been dealt with by the Roman Church, except where its avenging arm has been stayed by the civil laws of nations, or the exercise of its power has been withheld by considerations of expediency! This wide extending consistency of practice infers some powerful uniformity of principle.

But before I adduce evidence that such a

principle is inherent in the authorized system of the Roman Church, let me express my conviction that many of her members, especially in this country, have no fellowship with her in this matter. I am even willing to indulge the hope that some English Roman Catholics (I call them so in courtesy, and not as giving sanction to the phrase,) do not believe the real doctrines of their own church, nor are convinced of her anti-social and persecuting spirit. We cannot too carefully separate the system from the persons who are under its influence; of the former we can hardly speak too severely, to the latter we should ever extend the hand of charity and kindness.

A writer,¹ accredited by the authority of the Roman hierarchy of Ireland, thus states the doctrine of his Church with respect to heretics

“ Heretics, that are known to be such, are INFAMOUS for this very cause itself, and are deprived of Christian burial.”

“ Their GOODS are for this very cause itself to be seized. They are also justly afflicted with other CORPORAL PUNISHMENTS AS WITH TRANSPORTATION, IMPRISONMENT,” &c.

“ Are heretics justly punished with DEATH ?”

“ St. Thomas answers 22 quest. 11. art. 3. in corp. YES — BECAUSE FORGERS OF MONEY OR OTHER DISTURBERS OF

¹ Peter Dens, whose elaborate work has for several years been made the authorized class book of the Irish priests at their annual conferences. This point is established beyond controversy, by references to the work in the “ Priests’ Directories,” published annually in that country.

THE STATE ARE JUSTLY PUNISHED WITH DEATH, THEREFORE ALSO HERETICS WHO ARE FORGERS OF THE FAITH, AND AS EXPERIENCE TESTIFIES, GRIEVOUSLY DISTURB THE STATE."

"This is confirmed, because God in the Old Testament ordered the false Prophets to be slain; and in Deut. chap. xvii. v. 12, it is DECREED THAT IF ANY ONE WILL ACT PROUDLY AND WILL NOT OBEY THE COMMANDS OF THE PRIEST, LET HIM BE PUT TO DEATH. See also the 18th chap."

"THE SAME IS PROVED FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF THE 14th ARTICLE OF JOHN HUSS, IN THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE."

The decrees of the Council of Trent and the Council of Constance, confirmed by the Pope, inculcate the same principle, and enact that if any reject them they are to be dealt with themselves as heretics. Lest it should still be urged that these decrees are obsolete, and not in force, we have more recent evidence that the principles of the modern Church of Rome are still the same. In the Papal bull "UNIGENITUS," which was admitted by the Roman bishops in the year 1825, to be still in force in Ireland, we find the following passage:

"We command, moreover, the venerable brothers, patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, and other ordinaries of places, ALSO THE INQUISITORS OF HERETICAL PRAVITY, that they by all means COERCE AND COMPEL ALL CONTRADICTIONISTS AND REBELS WHATSOEVER by the CENSURES AND PENALTIES AFORESAID, AND OTHER REMEDIES OF THE LAW, and ever invoking, if need be, THE AID OF THE SECULAR ARM."

And to produce only one more instance of the real spirit of Romanism, I subjoin the

following extract from the Pope's Encyclical Letter, published in the Laity's Directory for 1833.

“ We speak, venerable brethren, of what our eyes have witnessed, and what has caused our tears to flow—of vice unchecked, abomination encouraged, and wickedness unrestrained, from which polluted founts that indifference flows which has created doctrines or rather ravings in favour of LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE, from which MOST PESTILENTIAL ERROR, a course has been opened to overturn the institutions and the influence of the Church—hence has increased that pest most to be dreaded, LIBERTY OF OPINION, and hither tends that worst and never to be sufficiently detested LIBERTY OF THE PRESS for which some contend ! !”

All the laws, canons, and decrees of the Church of Rome, speak the same language on this subject; humane INDIVIDUALS may express their abhorrence of such sentiments; bodies of men, sections of the Church of Rome itself, nay, many of its dignitaries, may abjure them, and may protest that they have never acted upon them, nor ever will enforce them;—and yet all this will not avail to give the discerning Protestant the smallest security for his liberty, his property, or his life; for as long as these intolerant decrees remain on the statute book of a Church that assumes infallibility, it is evident they may at any time be revived. Herein is the great difficulty of Romanism! If she will clear herself of the foul charge of

cruelty and intolerance, she must pronounce herself FALLIBLE ; but if she retain her INFALLIBILITY, guilt of no doubtful hue is stamped upon her brow ; and she is presented to us, and to our children, in the year 1835, in the same immutable, implacable character, as when she rose up fresh from the slaughter of the Lollards, of the Vaudois, or of the victims of St. Bartholomew's day ! And for what purpose do I say these things ? To exasperate you against your fellow subjects, and fellow countrymen ? God forbid. I have already endeavoured to separate THEM from the system in which they are entangled. My simple object, prayer, and desire is to awaken the minds of Protestants to a sense of their danger in the present crisis—to arm them with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God—to expose the folly and danger of latitudinarian sentiments, and to exhibit to all, the real doctrines of the Church of Rome.

I proceed now, LASTLY, to shew you THAT IT IS BENEATH THE BLIGHTING INFLUENCE OF THE PAPAL POWER, THAT OUR BRETHREN IN IRELAND, BOTH LAITY AND CLERGY, ARE NOW SUFFERING. I say LAITY as well as CLERGY ; for how many Irish Protestants have of late years expatriated themselves, and have sought more peaceful homes in our distant colonies,

driven from the land of their fathers by the anti-social and persecuting system which prevails ! And those whom they have left behind them, already begin to feel, and probably will yet feel more keenly, that the pastors of their pure and reformed Church, are not the only sufferers in the cause of their religion. But it is to the sufferings of the Protestant Clergy in Ireland, that our attention is at present chiefly directed ; sufferings real and acute, and as distressing as any that can well befall any body of Christian ministers. I might here appeal to your feelings—I might enumerate many well authenticated instances of cruel persecution, endured with exemplary patience—I might tell of families reduced from affluence to absolute penury, I could speak of some of our brethren who have fallen by the stroke of the assassin, and of many who have been compelled to flee for their lives to this country. But these cases are now familiar to the public ; and I would rather appeal to your principles and your consciences than to your feelings. I would remind you of the true and only cause of all these things ; OUR BRETHREN ARE MARTYRS IN THE CAUSE OF PROTESTANT TRUTH. Think not that these evils arise chiefly from political causes ; the outcry against tithes may be raised by designing men, national prejudices may be awakened,

anti-English feelings may be cultivated, but the spirit that directs the storm is Romanism ; and the offence of which these sufferers are guilty in her eyes is HERESY, and the promotion of HERESY !

While the Protestant Church of Ireland slumbered and slept, “ The strong man armed kept his palace, and his goods were in peace ;” but now she has aroused herself, her ministers preach the gospel far and wide ; scriptural schools have arisen in vast numbers ; the pure word of God is circulated extensively, the peasantry WILL read it ; they WILL send their children by hundreds and thousands to bible schools, and not a few of the deluded sons and daughters of superstition have embraced the reformed religion ; the fact is established, that the principles of Protestantism are on the advance in Ireland ! and hence the measures now adopted by the priesthood, to drive out the Protestant clergy of Ireland, by the slow process of starvation, and so to extirpate heresy by banishing its chief promoters. The conflict in our sister country is between light and darkness, truth and error, between liberty of conscience and spiritual thralldom. These men are fighting our battles, and suffering in the same holy cause in defence of which so many of our forefathers

bled and died. And shall we then desert them? They seek our sympathy—shall we withhold it? They look to England and ask, “Who is on the Lord’s side, who?” Shall there not be many to answer? They are constrained to ask our ALMS, shall we leave them to perish? Is not the time now come when every one among us, who is capable of discerning truth from error, and liberty from oppression, should stand forth, and with the apostle make his public declaration—“This I confess, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers!” And how can we do this more appropriately, than by adding our names to those of the thousands which have already appeared in every place, in support of this Christian cause.

Finally, brethren, I pray you examine the foundations of your faith—press more closely to your bosom the precious truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ—see to it, that your lives bear evidence to the sincerity of your profession—pity and pray for those who are deluded by error—harbour no unkindly feeling towards them—but let no false charity beguile you into the fatal delusions which prevail upon this subject. Acquaint yourselves with the real tenets of Romanism—read its authenticated publications—believe

the uniform testimony of history, and you will discover that it is, as a system, ANTI-SOCIAL—ANTI-SCRIPTURAL, AND ANTI-CHRISTIAN—and I pray God to avert its ascendancy in these realms!

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